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ABSTRACT

A study examined secondary scholastic journalism researchers' current and past experiences in scholastic journalism, their professional affiliations, their current responsibilities, their reasons for conducting research, their current collaborative research efforts, and their desire for future collaborative efforts. Fifty-five of the 86 members of the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (nearly 64%) responded to a questionnaire. Results indicated that: (1) 80% of the respondents reported that research is a part of their present responsibilities; (2) the picture created of the respondents was one of individuals having common interests in topics related to scholastic journalism as well as common motivations for conducting the research; and (3) many respondents welcomed ideas for encouraging more research, more collaborative research, and making the results of such research more widely available to each other as well as to other practitioners. Findings suggest that scholastic journalism researchers are interested in working together and that collaborative efforts can be a way of bridging some of the gaps in scholastic journalism research. (Appendixes of data and responses to open-ended questions are attached.) (RS)

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Secondary Journalism Research: Bridging the Gaps

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A paper presented to the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for possible presentation at the AEJMC Convention in Montreal, August 1992.

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Secondary Journalism Research: Bridging the Gaps

In formal research sessions and informal discussions by AEJMC Secondary Education Division members, one of the concerns voiced time and again is that research in secondary journalism is fragmented. That is, too often, research that is thought to be new and groundbreaking is really only new in that particular broken ground.

It is easy to see what is happening. The researchers are identifying issues and problems of concern to scholastic journalism and because of the cost and other logistical considerations many studies are limited to local and/or regional samples. However, what if other researchers in other areas shared the same or similar concerns? What if others are now or have conducted related studies? What if those researchers could be brought together -- perhaps through a center for secondary journalism research?

Or, how much richer and more valuable such research would be if only comparisons to and contrasts from similar studies are drawn?

Mapping the Territory (Arnold, 1991) is a valuable resource for researchers and an important response to the problem of fragmented secondary journalism research. Mapping

the Territory proposes a model for conceptualizing scholastic journalism, includes numerous pages of bibliographic citations, and acts as the introduction to a research guide for scholastic journalism. Such information provides a foundation for planning studies for replication or for adding to the body of knowledge or for building on existing theory.

An important component of "mapping the territory" is the way that the information helps in "bridging the gaps." Secondary journalism research will be strengthened as researchers learn from and cite studies that have come before. As others read the reports of scholastic journalism research that are **fully cited and referenced** they will gain an appreciation for the cumulative and broad-based efforts in the field.

But what about collaborative efforts as another way of bridging the gaps in scholastic journalism research? Are they feasible? Are scholastic journalism researchers interested in working together? Do they share some of the same motivations in conducting the research? Are they interested in some of the same or similar issues?

The research reported here addresses these questions and more by asking members of the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to respond to a questionnaire first administered in February of 1990

and updated the following year. The first response rate was 31 out of the 86 individuals on the list and the update yielded 24 additional respondents for a total response rate of nearly 64 percent.

The respondents were asked descriptive questions about their current and past experiences in scholastic journalism, their professional affiliations, their current responsibilities, their relationship with AEJMC Secondary Education Divisions and other Divisions. Responses to these questions can be found in Appendix A.

The respondents also were asked questions about their reasons for conducting research, their ranking of research issues, their current collaborative research efforts, and their desire for future collaborative efforts. The responses to these questions are discussed in this report. The reason for asking the questions is to get a better idea of the feasibility of creating a scholastic journalism collaboration network within the AEJMC Secondary Education Division.

Finally, the respondents were asked to give an open-ended response to the following statement: Please indicate your views on ways the Secondary Education Division can encourage members and be of help in conducting and sharing research. These open-ended responses will be referred to in this report and a complete

listing of the responses can be found in Appendix B.

Involvement in and reasons for conducting research

Respondents were given a list of activities including teaching, research, scholastic press associations, student workshops, adviser workshops, advising undergraduate students, advising graduate students, supervising student teachers, and other. They were then asked to indicate which of those activities were included in their present responsibilities and to indicate a precentage of time allocated to each.

Not surprisingly, the respondents indicated that many items on the list -- adding to more than one full-time position -- are included in their present responsibilities. It was not unusual to find respondents who are teaching, advising, supervising student teachers, running summer workshops, leading scholastic press associations and conducting research.

In analyzing the responses and what was obviously a very difficult (and much appreciated by this researcher) attempt on the part of respondents to allocate percentages to the many activities, it is clear that if this question were to be asked again in future attempts at gathering information, the question should read: Indicate which of the following are included in your

present responsibilities and please indicate how you are able to do them all.

For this report, the focus is on the respondent involvement in research. Even with the obviously heavy load of responsibilities, 80 percent or 44 of the 55 respondents indicate that research is a part of their present responsibilities.

When asked if they were currently involved as the **principal investigator** in a research project or research projects, 29 respondents said yes. When asked if they were currently involved in their research project as co-investigator, 17 respondents said yes.

The respondents were then asked questions about their collaborative research experience with colleagues from other schools, colleges, universities, associations, etc. Twenty-three respondents said that they had collaborated with colleagues outside of their own organizations and 37 said that they would be interested in collaborating with a colleague from another school, college, university, association, etc.

Respondents were also given the opportunity in an open-ended question to suggest specific topics for research, questions to be answered, or projects for such collaborative efforts. Those suggestions are listed below.

Note: Some of the following were suggested by more than one respondent and not all respondents interested in collaboration gave specific suggestions.

Suggested topics

* use of computers in scholastic journalism programs
* determining reasons for college major choice
* exploration of historical foundations for scholastic journalism - state by state comparison
* the role of and measurement of critical thinking skills in the journalism classroom and in the production of scholastic publications
* journalism and the social studies curriculum
* surveys of journalism grads -- where are they now and what and how are they doing
* compile and report data on high school student preferences in Journalism and Mass Communication programs
* compile and report data on minority high school students with journalism and mass communication interests
* keep track of minority students attending journalism workshops
* collect, prepare and share information on recruiting and maintaining minority students in journalism
* journalism ethics
* censorship and law issues
* teaching methodology
* graphics
* follow-up of JEA study on a state basis
* state certification for secondary journalism teachers
* JEA certification for secondary journalism teachers
* assess the role and importance of scholastic press associations in individual states
* publish a research annual for the division
* survey students attending scholastic press association meetings on a variety of topics -- knowledge, attitudes, media use, etc.
* develop a text for teachers in elementary and middle schools -- using journalistic techniques to teach writing
* assess the attitudes and support (or lack) of media professionals toward scholastic journalism
* cultural journalism
* oral history
* study the relationship of high school journalism programs with higher education

Next, the respondents who have conducted or were currently conducting research, (N=46) were asked what motivated their efforts. They were given choices and asked to rank them with "1" being the most important. The choices were a) a desire to test or create theoretical frameworks or models, b) an interest in exploring a topic -- to learn more, c) to collect information to help in carrying out current responsibilities, d) to provide job security, or e) other. Note: The N = 48 in the following responses because two respondents marked two separate categories as "1".

The respondents clearly favored **an interest in exploring a topic -- to learn more** with almost 42 percent or 20 respondents ranking that category as the number "1" motivation. A quarter of the respondents or 12 ranked **to collect information to help in carrying out current responsibilities** as number "1". **To provide professional job security and rewards** followed as the number "1" ranking with seven respondents. The **other** category came in fourth with five respondents ranking it as number "1" and **a desire to test or create theoretical frameworks or models** came in last with four respondents.

Respondents provided the following under the "other" category for research motivations:

* to provide practical information for selected audiences
* to provide information of use to practitioners
* to improve my teaching effectiveness
* to provide stimulus needed to change within my organization
* all four motivations are equal

Ranking of research categories

The respondents then were asked to rank 14 categories of research topics. The categories had been used for many years as "suggested" topics in the AEJMC Secondary Education Division Convention Call for Papers. Specifically, the respondents were asked to rank the statements to reflect their importance as research topics for the Secondary Education Division in the 1990s.

Educational Measurement and Evaluation texts and courses (eg. Collins, et al, 1979) warn prospective teachers of the dangers of using too many choices in matching, ranking and multiple choice questions. Keeping the order of importance in mind over 15 statements and being forced to commit to one statement over another is a difficult task. However, the 15 statements were included in the questionnaire mailed to respondents and the respondents were asked to rank them, because it was decided that determining the relative importance of these statements to the respondents could be helpful in determining the

research compatability of the respondents in proposed collaborative research efforts.

Again the respondents came through with valiant efforts and ranked as many statements as they possibly could. The results show that some respondents ranked all 15, some ranked fewer than 15, and some could not clearly distinguish some statements as being more important than others and would rank those statements as equal. In addition, there were statements that were ranked high by some respondents that were ranked much lower by others. Therefore determining the best way to report the results proved to be as challenging as ranking the statements.

Thus, the results are reported below from two different perspectives.

First, the results of the rankings are reported by listing the statements receiving the most number one rankings ranging from most to least. The number in parentheses following each statement indicates the number of first place rankings.

1: Preparation of secondary school journalism teachers and publication advisers (15)

2: Rationale for journalism and mass communication in the language arts curriculum (14)

3: Legal and ethical issues of the student press (12)

4: State certification of high school journalism teachers and publication advisers (10)

5: Relationships of the professional media with the high school media (8)

6 (four-way tie:) Support of school and community for the practice of teaching journalism (7)

6: Support of local high school journalism programs (7)

6: Relationship of high school journalism with colleges and universities (7)

6: Recruiting and retaining students for journalism careers (7)

7: Principal attitudes toward journalism education (6)

8 (two-way tie): Desktop publishing and other uses of technology in high school journalism (5)

8: Multicultural awareness and involvement in secondary journalism (5)

9: Others not listed (4)

10: History and historical perspectives of secondary journalism and the Secondary Education Division (3)

Second, the results are reported by thirds. The research question asked during analysis was: Does a first place ranking reflect the relative importance as well as a ranking of statements in the top third, middle third and bottom third. Some of those ranked first by some may be ranked by others in the middle or bottom third of the statements. Therefore, the following reports the ranking of the statements according to thirds, with the statements receiving the most rankings of 1 through 5 in the top third, the statements receiving the second

most frequent 1 through 5 rankings in the second third. With a five-way tie for fourth place and a three-way tie for fifth place in the top third of the rankings, there are twelve statements that qualify for the top third, three statements that fall into the middle third and no statements in the bottom third. To further illuminate the results of the rankings, each statement is followed by three numbers in parentheses. The first number indicates the number of respondent rankings in the top third, the second number indicates the number of respondent rankings in the middle third and the third number indicates the number of respondent rankings in the bottom third.

Top third

1: Preparation of secondary school journalism teachers and publication advisers (31, 8, 2)

2: State certification of high school journalism teachers and publication advisers (29, 11, 2)

3: Rationale for journalism and mass communication in the language arts curriculum (28, 13, 11)

4 (five-way tie): Support of school and community for the practice and teaching of journalism (22, 13, 3)

4: Support of local high school programs (22, 10, 4)

4: Principal attitudes toward journalism education (22, 12, 3)

4: Multicultural awareness and involvement in secondary journalism (22, 12, 5)

5 (three-way tie): Relationship of high school journalism with colleges and universities (17, 17, 4)

5: Desktop publishing and other uses of technology in high school journalism (17, 9, 14)

5: Recruiting and retaining students for journalism careers (17, 14, 7)

Middle third

6: The use of layout and design and graphics in high school publications (11, 7, 16)

7: History and historical perspectives of secondary journalism and the Secondary Education Division (7, 6, 20)

8: Others not listed (4, 5, 0)

Finally, the respondents were given the opportunity to suggest ways the AEJMC Secondary Education Division could encourage members and be of help in conducting and sharing research. Suggestions ranged from having the Division provide more research-sharing sessions at conventions to offering monetary rewards; from being open to non-technical approaches to helping set up networks of researchers; from sharing research in the Division newsletter to providing more opportunities for publication of research. (See Appendix B for complete listing.)

Conclusions

Eighty percent of the respondents report that research is a part of their present responsibilities, and the picture created of the respondents provided by this survey is one of individuals having common interests in topics related to scholastic journalism as well as common motivations for conducting the research.

It is clear from the responses to the survey as well as from the discussions of Division members at the AEJMC annual convention and midwinter meetings, that many members welcome ideas for 1) encouraging more research and more collaborative research, and 2) making the results of such research more widely available to each other as well as to other practitioners.

Some suggestions for the first, encouraging more research and more collaborative research: One respondent suggested the the Secondary Education Division could be of help by offering research grants. With a limited Division budget, research grants from the Division would be unlikely. However, there could be sources of research funding that could be mined with the help and blessings of the Division. In fact, if the Division can be of help in putting researchers and topics together, such funding quests could be more successful. For

example, in the cases where collaborative research efforts can provide the funding agency with research results holding a broader range of appeal and effect.

One respondent agreed that collaborative research is a good idea, particularly since "most of us work in isolation; that is, no one else here is that interested in secondary education research." But, the respondent also expressed concern that such "long-distance work in joint projects could be cumbersome. However, we might think about helping each other gather data and then work out some collegial arrangements as far as writing and authorship."

Some suggestions for the second idea, making the research results more available to other researchers and practitioners. The special refereed issue of Communication: Journalism Education Today is a good start. The first issue was published in Spring of 1992, with the cooperation of the Journalism Education Association, and the second issue is scheduled for publication in Spring 1993.

Other suggestions include publishing short research reviews in the Division newsletter. Or perhaps, if the funding could be found, publishing a Secondary Education Division research annual. Other AEJMC Divisions have successfully published such annuals and in fact, turned them into refereed periodic publications.

Finally, one open-ended suggestion from a survey respondent said that "this survey is a good start." Another suggested "sharing the results and setting up a clearinghouse for those interested in sharing or collaborating." The results of the survey have been shared here. The questions asked in the opening of this report have been addressed. Scholastic journalism researchers are interested in working together and collaborative efforts can be a way of bridging some of the gaps in scholastic journalism research.

Citations

Arnold, Mary. Mapping the Territory, a paper presented to the Secondary Education Division at the 1990 AEJMC convention in Minneapolis.

Collins, Harold; Johansen, John; and Johnson, James. Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1979.

Appendix A
AEJMC Secondary Education Membership Descriptive Responses

Highest Degree

Bachelor	2
Masters	17
Ph.D., Ed.D., or J.D.	36

Respondent Title (more than one title possible)

Professor/instructor	33
High School Press Association Officer	5
Administrator	8
Other	13

Years as AEJMC Member (Survey dates 1990 and 1991)

1 to 5	20
6-10	9
11-15	10
16-20	8
21-25	3
26-30	1
31-35	1
36-40	2
41-45	1

Secondary Education Division Member Membership in other AEJMC Divisions

Newspaper	29
History	14
Law	14
Public Relations	13
Minorities and Communication	8
Magazine	8
Visual Communication	8
Advertising	6
Mass Communication & Society	5
Communication Theory & Methodology	5
Media Management & Economics	4
Qualitative Studies	4
Radio and Television Journalism	1

Ever an AEJMC officer or liaison

Yes	24
No	31

How did member learn of Secondary Education Division

Learned from AEJMC literature	20
Learned from colleague	18
Learned from convention activities	12
Learned from an administrator	4
Learned from other sources	1

Membership in other journalism/communication organizations (includes organizations registering 15 or more memberships)

Journalism Education Association	30
State scholastic press association	24
Columbia Scholastic Press Association	20
Quill and Scroll	16
National Scholastic Press Association	16
Other*	17

*International Communication Association, College Media Advisers, Society for Professional Journalists, Investigative Reporters & Editors, Women in Communications

Highest Degree awarded by respondent school

Ph.D.	34
MA/MS	12
BA/BS	2
Associate or two-year degree	2
Other	5

Number ofyears in current position

1-5	27
6-10	14
11-15	1
16-20	6
21-25	1
26-30	2
Missing or other	4

Description of current position

Tenured or tenure track	31
non-tenure	12
Professional staff	10
other	2

For those teaching in higher education -- what level are courses

Undergraduate	24
Graduate	29
Both	11

Members presentation and publication rates

Presented refereed papers	28
Presented invited papers	41
Refereed publications	39
Other publications	32
Invited presentations	28
Other ways of sharing research or expertise*	42

* Workshops, professional meetings, honors lectures, reviews, speeches. books, consulting, general (mass) media reports

Note: The following questions refer to the respondents who have taught high school journalism and advised high school publications, but are not currently doing so.

Number of respondents who have taught or advised

Taught high school journalism	29
Advised high school newspaper	26
Advised high school yearbook	19
Advised news magazine	5
Advised literary magazine	12
Advised other student media	4

APPENDIX B

OPEN-ENDED REPONSES

Please indicate your views on ways the Secondary Education Division can encourage members and be of help in conducting and sharing research:

This survey is a good start. The Iowa Survey of Publication is another indication of promise. Work with Minority Division, perhaps to develop a profile of the minority journalism career path. (i.e. What happens to MJW recruits?)

Spotlight interesting programs (in newsletter). Send a list of journalism-related research projects (underway) to division members.

Maybe publishing more research to get the name of division out and to share its concerns. Join in as a group to various state efforts.

By sharing the results of this survey and setting up a clearinghouse for those interested in sharing or collaborating.

The idea of publishing summaries of papers in scholastic journalism publications (S & S, C-Jet etc.) is good. It allows high school publication advisers to become aware of what is happening at the university level.

By providing a list of people interested in research and their area of interest. By publishing members' research presented at convention or abstracts.

Initiate research. Provide "hook-up" with others working for research assistance.

This questionnaire is an excellent start. Let's build networks and provide ways for researchers in this area to find out what others are doing.

Offer research grants. Offer publishing opportunities. Provide network to get researchers together.

Offer monetary rewards. Be open to non-technical approaches.

We need to think out how networks can be set up - sounds like a great idea.

One way is to report relevant research by Sec Div persons in the quarterly newsletter we send out. So, it would be helpful to know what research is out there.

I think we need more of an opportunity to work on state directorship problems and concerns that are of a more immediate concern to us and to the advisers we are serving. I know that JEA attempts to bridge this gap, however it would be more advantageous for us to work more on the "nuts and bolts" issues that affect us. I realize that not all of the secondary education division members are state directors, but this element is not being addressed at present.

I don't think we've even scratched the surface with research into secondary education. I would like to see some research done based on some of the models Madeline Hunter has set forth. What impact has she had on the typical journalism teacher. Her entire approach to teaching seems to me to be one that most high school journalism classes are patterned after anyway. It would be nice if there were more monetary incentives to do secondary education research.

Some system or networking of resources, materials, research being done in member's departments to be of help to others doing research and lessening duplication of similar activities would be valuable. The booklet that Mary Arnold and Jennifer Messenger compiled is a great aid, but updating will be important to help keep members and new members current.

It has been a pleasure to watch the Division grow and gain sophistication. It is frustrating to see the same issues continue to be problems and watch secondary school journalism struggle for acceptance and recognition. I hope the secondary division never becomes so impressed with its research that it forgets the teaching is the most important think we do and the student, not the thesis, is our most important product. Although my present responsibilities do not include any secondary journalism my interest remains with you and many of my best memories are those of JEA, NSPA, Q & S, CSPA, NCTE, summer workshops, etc. I visited a newsroom in northern PA the other day and during lunch I explored with the reporters and editors just what they had in common. It turned out to be that each had been editor of his or her school paper. The legacy lives on.

I thought the meeting you conducted in New Orleans where we shared ideas about needed research was very good. Having a session like that at least once a year is a good idea -- then set aside one session for members to get together to match interests and get some projects started/germinated. Helping establish new publishing options is a good idea, too. Everyone who presents a paper should have copies to distribute at the meeting.

Time and institutional recognition affect research efforts for many members. Receiving recognition for efforts by refereed publications is a problem. Perhaps these problems have answers, but they haven't been discussed with solutions. Also, many members are not expected to do research in this area. Their jobs don't require research. Many members research in other subject fields. Funding possibilities; publications which accept refereed articles or topics with national appeal must be identified. Perhaps joint ventures with colleagues is an answer.

The potential for new members -- and those who can help advance the state of high school journalism -- exists among the language arts and journalism supervisors/consultants within school districts and state departments of education. While these persons have a different research agenda than college professors, they are essential to supporting and advancing the status of scholastic journalism. Perhaps the division should start with research <u>about</u> this overlooked group. What are their attitudes about student publications? How do these persons advance or impede the progress of advisers and students? Do they seek district funding for competitions, teacher or student workshops? Do they set up policies that help or hurt in ad revenue or fundraising activities? Members who teach in universities need to model the behavior of research for their students in the methods or adviser classes. The "Teacher as researcher" concept from NCTE dovetails nicely with training in journalism.

The guide and paper that I am working on should begin to establish a conceptual framework for discussing past and future research in scholastic journalism. By making this guide and other current research available to members, we can begin to put research at the forefront of the advancement of knowledge for and about scholastic journalism. When I'm done with my work on my doctorate, I am anxious to work on more collaborative projects--that prospect is the most exciting aspect of future journalism research for me. I see the "cross fertilization" that occurs when people from different institutions and backgrounds as a very healthy trend for scholastic journalism research. Your work in finding a refereed journal for scholastic journalism research articles is also right on track!

As a Broadcasting Educator and a Vocational Educator, I often feel a large segment of the industry is being overlooked by the established academic organizations. AEJMC seems to be very open to new ideas and very supportive. I personally hope to become more involved as time permits, beginning with this summer's conference in the twin cities. AEJMC needs to move to support electronic journalism education in our high schools and vocational centers. In Illinois there are a number of FM radio stations operated by high school students as well as numerous cable and broadcast TV productions by these students. Our students produce a weekly commercial TV series on stations throughout central Illinois (Braintrust). The series begins its eleventh year this spring. Your survey shows a bias toward print media. You need to broaden your coverage to include electronic journalism. This survey is a good start.

1) Encourage individuals to do work on their own -- and to present findings at our summer convention or mid-winter meeting. (Allow me an anecdote: In Fall 1981 after I had landed at Iowa, John Butler called from LSU and more or less "put" me on the program for the January Mid-Winter Meeting in Norman, OK. While I cursed him under my breath initially, I was grateful in the long term because I used data on file in the office -- and right under my nose -- that helped me in my job. that helped others understand a contemporary issue, that provided me a refereed paper, and the like.) 2) Certainly the "Call for Papers" of the Division helps -- and we've had very solid numbers lately for a division of our size (e.g., if the Newspaper or Mass Comm and Society divisions received the same percentage of research papers for convention consideration, they would have in the <u>hundreds</u> -- which they have not. The point is, our Division, though small, has had an excellent percentage of participation among its members.) 3) Joint research projects are fine, but logistics are problematic. Most of us work in isolation (that is, no one else here is that interested in secondary education research). Thus, we would have to do long-distance work in joint projects, and that can be cumbersome. However, we might think about helping each other gather data and then work out some collegial arrangements as far as writing and authorship. 4) By working with <u>C:JET</u>, or a similar scholastic publication, we might do a "practical applications of research" column -- or an actual refereed situation as discussed recently in New Orleans. This might encourage new (and usable) research.

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